

CHRISTIAN MODERATION:

THE

WORD IN SEASON,

TO THE

Church and the Country.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN EMMANUEL CHURCH, BALTIMORE, ON THE
EVENING OF WHITSUNDAY, MAY 19, 1861,

BY

NOAH HUNT SCHENCK,

RECTOR.

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BALTIMORE, *May* 21, 1861.

To the REV. NOAH HUNT SCHENCK,

Rector of Emmanuel Church.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—The undersigned having listened with much pleasure and profit to your admirable Discourse on "CHRISTIAN MODERATION," delivered on Sunday night last, can but think its teachings well calculated to exert a happy influence upon all who may read it; and therefore beg leave to request that you will furnish a copy of the same for publication.

AUSTIN DALL,
JOSEPH REYNOLDS,
W. PINKNEY WHYTE,
WILLIAM K. MERRITT,
GEO. T. PARKHURST,
H. A. THOMPSON,
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W. N. NICHOLAS,
JAMES HODGES,
THOS. F. MURDOCH,
HENRY M. BASH,

W. H. D. C. WRIGHT.

EMMANUEL CHURCH, BALTIMORE, *May* 22, 1861.

To MESSRS. DALL, JOHNSON AND OTHERS:

My Dear Sirs,—I respond to your kind letter requesting for publication the Sermon preached on Sunday evening, by sending you herewith the manuscript. It is enough for me to know that you believe the Discourse, in printed form, may do good, to yield a ready compliance with your wishes.

I am, very affectionately,

Your obedient servant,

N. H. SCHENCK.

S E R M O N .

Phil. iv. 5.—“LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN UNTO ALL MEN.”

IN preaching to you the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ, I should but partially discharge my duty were I to present you only the cardinal truths and essential duties of this mighty scheme. There are other guide-posts on the highway of spiritual life, besides the great land-marks of faith. There is light to lead us on, other than that which flashes as the light of beacons from mountain to mountain. There are wayside signals, there are valley lights by whose guidance the pilgrim may be led from stage to stage, from mountain to mountain in his toilsome and perilous journey from earth to heaven. We are but too prone to neglect those teachings of scripture which hold a subordinate place in the plan of salvation until some novel combination of circumstances reveals their importance. We invoke the Holy Spirit to plant in our heart the germs of essential truth. We supplicate the gracious dews of heaven to water the ground of the heart, that these germs may have vigorous root and wholesome growth. We cultivate with assiduity the young and tender plants. We watch their development and rejoice in their fruitage. But are there not other seeds which should be sown, other fruit which must be produced? There are elements of Christian character and products of Christian practice, beyond the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and their legitimate results. In the architecture of our house of hope, if we would rear such a structure as shall be pleasing in the sight of God, we are not at liberty to neglect those comparatively unessential, yet very important details which

give at once strength and beauty, security and grace to the edifice. While then we preach "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," we also preach, as of secondary but great importance to the soul, that code of morals which the Saviour taught, and which his followers must recognize if they would "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things."

Under this conviction, I have selected from St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, a passage which commends to the observation of all Christians a rule of action, apparently of no great importance, but which, when duly considered in its relations and results, opens up to view a field of duty demanding faithful tillage.

I am prompt to acknowledge that there is that in the character of our people, and in the present convulsion of the State, which not only makes our proposed meditation peculiarly pertinent, but which imperatively demand of us as Christian citizens that we give it our gravest heed.

As a truly balanced Christian moderation is one of the later results of a regenerated and sanctified nature, so reasoning by analogy, we would scarcely expect to find much of moderation in the counsels of a state or the character of a people whose civil existence had been of comparatively brief duration. This political virtue is only developed after years and generations of hard experience; after foreign wars and commercial disasters and it may be intestine conflicts have convinced the state that "forbearing one another in love" is a principle as necessary to be conserved in national as in religious life.

In our own land we have had more of moderation in legislation and in our diplomatic relations than from the preceding reasoning would be argued, but this is readily accounted for by the facts that we profited largely in the organization of our government by the experience of other nations, and that the men who launched our life-boat of liberty were endowed with a wisdom rarely to be met in the history of infant states. But unfortunately as we have receded in the lapse of time from the heroic period in which our liberties had birth, so have we receded, and not a little, from that high standard of moderation then

erected. In this we have reversed the order of healthful civil progress. The antipathies and prejudices and conflicting interests and opposing theories of government, which militated against a Union of these States when the Revolution was successfully ended, were, to say the least, not less than those which are now arrayed against its perpetuation; and yet, then, they all gave way before this high and holy principle presented in the text. Have we so far degenerated in civil wisdom and Christian morals as to look in vain now in the high places of political trust for that principle which then triumphed so gloriously?

But most inimical to this law of moderation, is the individual character of the great majority of our people. The American mind is a strange compound of the mercurial and the phlegmatic, the ardent and indifferent. The former predominates in the time of pursuit, the latter in the time of attainment. But as we are in the stage of rapid growth and development, and our people are, for the most part, in the mad pursuit of wealth and honors, individual success and national aggrandizement, so do we find that the mercurial element in the temper of the common mind is its controlling force. We are excitable to a degree. Novelties and sensational events have gotten to be the pabulum which the popular taste incessantly craves. Extravagant thoughts, extravagant desires, extravagant plans of business, extravagant pageants, extravagant language, have so widely obtained as almost to become conventional. The "golden mean" is held to be part of an effete system. That which is moderate is considered common-place, or as lagging behind the quick march of the age. The rashness and impetuosity of youth, the recklessness and headlong rush of the inexperienced and the irresponsible and the uneducated, command the eye and the admiration of the gaping crowd. The child is master of the man. Passion has vanquished reason. Moderation is borne down under the press of extremism, and the conservative or moderate element of our population is forced to bend to the radicalism which rules or ruins. It is most true, however, that the spirit which I now deprecate, advances the individual and the nation at giant strides, but whether in the direction of

a true or false success, whether with healthy or hollow progress, is a question for the political economists and moral philosophers of a coming age finally and distinctly to decide, as the Christian hesitates not to decide at once.

But beyond these considerations, there is that in the tone and temper of the great strife now convulsing our land, which demands of every preacher of righteousness, every teacher of Christian morals, a re-publication of the Gospel law of moderation. And let it not be supposed that the execution of this law is necessarily suspended in times of war. On the contrary, it is then that the Christian man, be he citizen or soldier, is by the highest considerations of duty to God, to his country and himself, invoked to obey it with holy fidelity. The brutal ferocity of man, when his passions are kindled to a flame by the hot breath of war, can only be held in check by the lofty and benign influence of this principle. All that is redeeming in the grim visage of war, is due to this virtue. That chivalrous sentiment which preserves a noble bearing to an honorable foe, which is always ready for the arbitrament of reason, which would promptly substitute pacific negotiations for the ordeal of blood, which extends a courteous clemency to the vanquished, and which had always rather conquer a peace than a province, is a sentiment fathered and fostered by the principle of my text. Moderation has had a place and an influence in cabinets and on battle-fields, as we read in the history of war. And now, when the bright visions of peace among the nations possessing a Gospel civilization, so fondly indulged by the philanthropist and the Christian, have proved but phantoms; nay, when this great republic, the sanctuary of free principles, the home of toleration, is rocked and riven by intestine strife, shall we find reason and religion combining to curb the fierceness of the people, shall we observe our high type of civilization printing upon the common mind the timely lessons of moderation? Alas, that we must look in vain. Deeply humiliating to us, as is the fact of civil war, still more humbling to the patriot and the Christian is the keen malevolence which characterizes it. We fain would believe that the appeal to arms would be made and accepted "more in sorrow than in

anger." It must not be forgotten, no matter what our estrangements, what our conflicts, that the citizens of this land are brothers, born under the same Constitution, and reared under the genial influence of the same free institutions. However we may be arrayed against each other by the antagonism of sectional interests and the clashing of hostile policies, the duties inseparable from our relationship at least demand that we forbear in love, until such forbearance ceases to be a virtue, by conflicting with true charity. The manhood, the nobility of the free and enlightened and christianized citizen, require of him a decent observance of every courtesy of speech, every clemency of action, that may alleviate the horrors of this unnatural strife, and shew that we are brothers still, though brothers at war. Such wholesome sentiments, I grieve to say, are, however, high above the ruling tone of the present popular feeling. Ministers of "the Gospel of reconciliation," that Gospel whose ushering anthem was "peace on earth, good will to men," officers of the Church Militant, "the weapons of whose warfare are not carnal," but spiritual, and who have solemnly pledged themselves to "know nothing but Christ and him crucified," "preachers of righteousness," who have given themselves to the life-long service of a "God of love," not only go into willing slavery to the despotism of an excited and exacting popular sentiment and pander from their pulpits to the sharp appetites of warlike congregations, but deserting the temples where men resort to enquire the way of life, suspending their ministrations to dying souls who look to them for spiritual advice and direction, abandoning the flocks committed to their pastoral care,—put on the armor of man and go forth bristling with carnal weapons, marching under banners dight with human devices, exchanging the sword of the spirit, glittering with the glory of God, for the sword of battle, red with the blood of man,—silencing the psalms of praise, the hymns of thanksgiving and all the sweet minstrelsy of the soul in the thunderous roll and roar of war's artillery. The public press, an engine of unequalled power and influence, ignoring its moral accountability and mistaking license for liberty, has exhausted the vocabulary of hate

and revenge in its fierce and almost fiendish denunciation, until we are come to enquire most anxiously, whether the impending struggle is to be characterized by the bloody ferocities of savage warfare, or by the honorable usages which mark the hostilities of civilized nations. The quiet Christian, who, for his life time has been "eating the bread of thankfulness," "in patience possessing his soul," pursuing the even tenor of his spiritual fidelity, is suddenly fired with "the wrath of man," and burnishing the rusted arms of his ancestors, rushes forth scarce knowing whither or for what, but with the light of battle on his face, and the fire of passion raging in his heart. Even the Church, the arsenal of spiritual weapons, the magazine of love and peace, the fortress of redeeming truth, has been made to change in some degree the regimen of its well-ordered life, in compliance with the inexorable demands of the hour. And woman is forgetting her peaceful and soothing ministry. That post of love, that office of gentleness to which she is ordained, and gracefully discharging the duties of which, she so embellishes the walks of society and so ornaments the else rugged pathway of life, is in instances abandoned for the arena of fierce debate, or neglected in the nervous reactions of feminine fury. The light of her love shining through the tears of her sympathy, is wont to cast upon the storm clouds of earth the rainbow of promise, where beautifully blended and arched, the harmony of her virtues and the graces of her character relieve the gloom, and tell of the return of sunshine and calm. But in vain do we look for it now. All this is the result of that rancor of feeling, and that acerbity of speech which had their beginning in the wordy broils of politicians, lusting for office,—but which have now so diffused their poisonous leaven as to corrupt the great mass of the people. In such a condition of the common mind, what is to become of the Gospel of salvation which suspends not its requirements? What is to become of the souls of dying men, who are released not from their fearful responsibilities? Believe me, brethren, it is high time that the people should hear of the Gospel law of moderation.

Christian moderation is the thinking and doing that

which is right and righteous, with a constant regard to all other existing duties and obligations. Thus it is seen that it enters as an ingredient into every doctrine of Christ's system of salvation, and into every virtue by which those doctrines are adorned. It is moreover to be observed that moderation is predicated of that which is not evil in itself, but which may become so by subjection to the uncurbed will or passions of man. Thus, liberality is a virtue, but it may descend to prodigality, and so become a vice. So zeal is a beautiful grace of the renewed life, even as it is an important agent in worldly success, but when it is "zeal without knowledge," or zeal in a wrong direction, or zeal which runs into fanaticism or intolerance, it loses its normal character. So patriotism is a civil virtue, but when it becomes arrogant, and ceases to respect other shades of patriotism, and will tolerate nothing but the rulers and policies of its arbitrary choice, it is no more love of country, but an attempted despotism of opinion. Again, there are many worldly pleasures, so called, innocent in themselves, and in which we may temperately indulge, but from the moment our indulgence becomes immoderate, they cease to be innocent and become vicious. Let it be clearly understood, then, that moderation can never in any just sense be predicated of that which is evil in itself. When Christ declared that he came "not to send peace, but a sword," he only declared that divine truth was utterly irreconcilable with human error, and that no toleration was to be expected for that sin which waged relentless war against the soul. But when in another place, he taught us by the mouth of his great apostle, that we should "be all things to all men, that we might by all means save some," he gave us distinctly to understand that his gospel contemplated the weaknesses and prejudices of men, and that in its practical working it was to be adjusted to the peculiarities of each individual case, never for an instant distorting any of its characteristic features, never for an instant presenting an oblique view of the mighty scheme, never for an instant compromising with sin; but with such judicious moderation adapting the new and potent gospel remedy to man's moral disease, as to secure for him a speedy and per-

manent restoration. When the ushering angels sang of “peace on earth and good will to men,” they celebrated not the advent of an era of religious strife. The opening anthem of the New Testament told of better things, of “gentleness and temperance and long suffering.” It welcomed to earth that “meek and lowly man,” who in all his life and all his doctrine taught that “the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” It is of such moderation as this we speak, when we claim for it a place in every part of that system of saving truth and righteous conduct through which lies the path of redemption. This principle descended to us from God when he endowed us with freedom of will and made salvation voluntary. It was re-published by Christ when he presented in his gospel and sacrifice, new motives for our acceptance of life, but leaving us still to choose if we would the fearful alternative. It is incorporated in that commission under which the minister of Christ goes forth to his labor of love. It is found engrafted on the tenets of our faith. Though not a link in the chain of salvation, yet it hangs as a graceful appendage to every link, in places interwoven, and again fringing as with gold the bond which stretches from earth to heaven. And with what a mellow ray doth this spirit of moderation light up the whole course of the path our Saviour trod in his painful pilgrimage here. The gentle Jesus never acted, never spake, except as forbearing in love or admeasuring the just proportion of counsel.—Though never weary in his denunciation of sin, he never wearied in conciliating and winning back the sinner. Behold in Him that spirit which our text enjoins as he endured such “contradiction of sinners against himself,” as he bent beneath those blasts of persecution which swept over him while he journeyed upon earth, as he bowed under humiliations such as never before were heaped upon man, as with his “report unbelieved” he pursued the even tenor of his way, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, but with singleness of eye looking unto the end;

as at the last he “endured the cross, despising the shame,” going “as a lamb to the slaughter,” and “as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth,” not “rendering railing for railing,” but patiently “suffering for the truth.” Listen to this spirit as from the mouth of Jesus, it makes meek reply to scoffing Jew, to self-righteous Pharisee and unbelieving Sadducee, as swift to counsel and slow to judge, it breathes forth sweet messages of God reconciled in Christ. Here it in those moving appeals, “could ye not watch with me one hour,” “will ye also go away.” Hear it again in that prayer which arose from the depths of a heart cleft by the sins of men, “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.” There listen to the word, and there behold the conduct of him who is our great example. Just as we fall beneath that standard, just so far are we beneath the requirements of that gospel by which we must live and from which we shall be judged.

Although entering as we have seen into the very texture of the gospel, the spirit of Christian moderation has not obtained to any marked degree in the world, not even in the hearts of those who have professed the doctrines of this gospel and invoked its guidance; and this for the reason already assigned, that moderation is one of the later developments of the renewed soul. The history of the Church since the advent, as before, has many pages stained with the blood of the martyrs or the infidels. Many of the events of her history are disclosed to us in that lurid light which flashes from the fires of persecution. That this has been occasioned by an utter disregard of Christ’s positive teaching, no one can deny. Nor can any one deny that it was mainly caused by defiant rebellion to the gentle rule of that principle of Christian living inculcated in the text. Had but moderation ruled the hearts of men and swayed the councils of the Church, what fearful scenes of guilt and misery had been spared the world, and what grand results to the cause of Christ might have been attained. Had men, Christian men, but remembered that “the weapons of their warfare were not carnal,” that the “armor of God” was their only armor, that souls were to be saved by entreaty and not by compulsion, that intolerance was no part of the

Christian character, persecution no agent for the furthering of the Redeemer's cause, how vastly different now might be the temporal and spiritual condition of the world, how widely different the fate of the millions who in the Christian era have run their course and gone hence to enter upon their unchangeable destiny. Arguing thus the fearful consequences of the disuse of moderation, shall we not be stimulated to its practical observance. There is a moral of high significance to this historical and negative view of the principle under discussion.

But our business is with the present. While we deplore the past, let us not close our ears, however, to the sad but useful lesson it imparts. If we have in addition to the direct teaching of Scripture, the testimony of all the Christian ages to the value of this virtue of moderation, demonstrated by its faithful cultivation, and even still more, by its flagrant disuse, shall we be true men before God and in the presence of our brethren, if we fail to foster its growth within us or enjoin its cultivation upon others.

I do not, of course, propose considering now the practical value of Christian moderation in relation to every condition of the spiritual life, but rather to confine your attention to its bearing upon that particular phase which we, as Christian citizens, are just now invited to contemplate. There are certain exigencies of our day, already adverted to, which peremptorily demand of us a prayerful re-consideration of the obligations we owe to God and to each other, and which especially press upon us the patient exercise of a well-balanced moderation.

But preliminary to the attempt to apply this principle to the circumstances which surround us, it may be well to enquire for a moment, how far a commissioned preacher of the Gospel of Christ may go in the discussion of such questions of a political character as stand related to spiritual life in the individual or in the Church. In this wise, moreover, shall I be preaching the gospel of moderation to myself and my brethren in the ministry, who need to hear it not less than our congregations. The commission we hold as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus, whose kingdom is not of this world, calls upon us to proclaim "righteousness, tem-

perance and judgment to come.''' We are legates from the Supreme Governor of the universe to a race of rebels, bearing an amnesty, and the conditions of perfect reconciliation. We come, holding up Christ and him crucified. Our text is short and always the same. *Repentance and faith. Justification only through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus.* This is the limitation of our warrant. Outside of this no one can venture with safety. They who feed the soul from other granaries than this, feed it on husks. To my mind the subject presents no difficulty whatever. I confess an utter inability to reconcile the discussions of experimental moral reforms, and politico-religious abstractions, and all side issues of whatever name, with the faithful preaching of Christ crucified to dying sinners. And even where the preacher believes that such lateral topics are important to the general success of the truth, he is bound, under the law of moderation, to weigh well whether *his* presentation of them will not excite such antagonism of feeling among the people as shall more than neutralize the good proposed. The cause he is pledged to advocate is too vast in its interests to be jeopardized by experiments. Every member of a congregation is a responsibility upon the shoulders of the minister, and he has no right to risk alienation of feeling and loss of influence by any departure from the right line of plain gospel preaching. It will be no extenuation in the day of final account that his preaching has enured to the securing of civil franchises and the advancement of reforms and the general amelioration of man's moral condition, if the blood of souls be demanded at his hands, souls—chilled—starved—lost—through his neglect. Nay, it is when men's minds are most occupied with grave and exciting questions of society and the state, that they most of all need to be reminded of those eternal truths and those paramount obligations and those imperative duties which make up the sum of the gospel. Whatever may be the preacher's rights as a man, and privileges as a citizen, he has no right as a minister of Jesus, as a curator of souls,—he is not privileged in the pulpit or out of it to plunge into such radical reforms, or conclude himself into such a partizan position upon those issues which heat the

public mind as shall lose for him the sympathy and cordial regard of any portion of that congregation whose souls are committed to him for instruction and guidance.

But, it is asked, can you with the clear command of God and the example of the Prophets before you, discharge your whole duty if you permit public vices and national sins to go unrebuked? To this there can be but one reply. It is clearly the preacher's duty to rebuke and condemn sin, wherever found, in whatever guise, however circumstanced. There is, however, another and more vexed question propounded, and one whose speedy and just settlement would conduce in no slight degree to the harmony of our Christian and political world. Upon one side the claim is put forth, that it is part of the duty of the Christian Ministry to stand guard at the door of our municipal institutions, to watch with sleepless vigilance the machinery of government, to warn of apprehended danger, to counsel in the hour of political emergency, to denounce the wrong and laud the right, in fine, to sit as a supreme court of morals, and decide upon the constitutionality of all political legislation proposed or enacted. On the other side, it is argued that as the "Kingdom of Christ" and Christ's followers "is not of this world," so is it clearly without the province of Christ's ministers, clearly a departure from duty, for them to become complicated in affairs civil or social. The problems of State are held to be beyond the purview of the preacher. From the storms which sweep the political horizon, it is held Christ's officers should be carefully guarded, that they, with unimpaired influence and husbanded energies, may go forth to the fulfilment of their plainly revealed duty, and breast the storms which sweep across the spiritual horizon. And is it not so? It cannot be denied that the assumption of the ministerial office in obedience to the call of the Spirit involves an utter self-abnegation. It is clearly our duty to sink the individual in the officer. As the captain of a marshalled host looks not to himself but to the cause, thinks not of himself but of those whom he commands, so should officers of the Cross subordinate self and family and country and all, to the one great object to which he is solemnly ordained, viz: the glory of God in the sal-

vation of the souls of men. Thus the preacher, by reason of his vocation, loses not a whit of his citizenship, yet there are times when it is very pragmatical and inconsistent for him to vindicate it. He has, it may be, as much at stake as any member of the commonwealth, yet he is not privileged to defend it, if by that defence he abates a tittle of the efficiency of his service as Christ's agent. There are sacrifices in the cause of his Master which he is permitted to make, and which are permitted no other class: and he should rejoice in it as a precious privilege, allying him, as it does, to Christ by the bond of suffering.—remembering, as he always should, that he is called upon “not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for him.”

But again there may be, as now, great and even crucial questions in governmental economy presented for popular consideration and popular suffrage. These, it is claimed by some, have a moral, and by others, even a spiritual aspect. Shall the Preacher be silent now upon these inflammatory themes? Let us make reply, “not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” Let us not go to the bloody records of civil conflicts, or “religious wars,” falsely so called, to find precedents. Let us not inquire what has or has not been done by the pulpit in the political crises of nations. Let us take neither uncertain history nor fallible men for our guides. As the minister of Christ dare not assume to act aside from or beyond that authority which has been delegated to him, and as he has by the most solemn vows dedicated his whole man to the cause of souls, he has but to go to the Bible, where are his commission and his orders, his chart and his compass and there read, mark and learn his duty. Without ranging wide or delving deep, this can be promptly and perfectly appreciated by the study and imitation of Christ. If there was ever a time in the history of the world when national sins, and public vices, and social corruptions demanded specific denunciations from the pulpit, it was during the period of Christ's incarnation. And the Saviour hesitated not, but boldly denounced classes of sins and classes of sinners, even as his faithful ministers now reiterate his words in pronouncing “woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees,

hypocrites.” But all this is of such sins and such sinners as the Church then as now united in condemning. Mark well however, that Christ in his day when so many rebelled against the tyranny of the Roman rule, when the political firmament was continually overcast, protested not against his civil enslavement to Rome, but rendered to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar’s, and mindful rather of his master’s business than of his own outraged rights as a citizen, went about “doing good” and proclaiming the “words of everlasting life.” We look in vain to find him teaching nice questions in morals, or discussing the abuses of government, or suggesting the present or prospective relation of the one to the other. His “kingdom was not of this world.” His errand was to man the sinner, not to man the citizen, to our spiritual and not our civil condition. He sought to subvert not an unjust civil rule, but the fatal dominance of Sin and Satan. In the appointment of those who were to succeed him in proclaiming that salvation which he died to consummate, his instructions contained nothing which looked to the advocacy or defence of social rights or civil liberties. Christ foresaw every exigency of their mission, every juncture of circumstances in which they should be placed, and yet spake he not a word to them of the guardianship of national virtue, or their obligations to expose the fallacies of government, or to avert by pastoral exhortations the apprehended dangers to accrue from proposed measures of public policy. As if to guard against such mistaken conceptions of duty, Christ commanded them to make no preparations for defence, when brought before Rulers and Kings; giving them thus to understand that God would protect his own, and that the days of their ministry were too precious to be spent in the study of the civil systems under which they should labor, that their business was to avert danger, not from the body, but the soul. How faithfully were these instructions followed in the cases of Stephen and Paul, and others of the ministers of the early Church. And not only by them, but by the Evangelists of the Mediæval Church and the Martyrs of the modern reformation. Neither in the life nor the published gospel of the Saviour, is to be found license for the

introduction of matters extra-evangelical into the pastoral ministrations of his ordained servants. No argument in support of this misuse of office can be derived from the fact of an unprecedented juncture of events, for our gospel is catholic both as to times and places, and regards every possible combination of circumstances. No argument can be derived from necessity, for the popular mind is supplied through almost numberless channels, and no man need err from want of light. No argument can be based on any satisfactory results which have been occasioned by this peculiar exercise of the ministerial office. Such results have never appeared. On the contrary, increased party rancor and reduced ministerial efficiency, and a general lowering of the clerical character in the popular mind, seem to be the only tangible results. Such I believe to be the province of the preacher in this regard, as distinctly defined in the word and work of Jesus, and this the manner of discharging his high responsibilities as guided by the calm and steady radiance of Christian moderation, emanating from "the Captain of our Salvation."

I now return to the main object had in view in the present discourse, viz. the spiritual and civil necessity which rests upon every one, in times like these especially, to make their "moderation known unto all men." There can be no faithful walking as Christians, there can be no restoration of peace without it. From clergy and laity are alike demanded at this crisis, a decided display of that spirit they have imbibed from their master. From the clergy, because they are by virtue of their office, "lights set upon a hill," and should reflect to an observing people a clear and steady gospel effulgence. From the Christian laity, because they and their principles enter as a conservative element into the compact of government, and from their character and position are bound to compromise and moderation, as the great cohering forces of the federation under which they live. In a government like ours the existence of parties, if they are properly curbed and frequently changed, affords no good ground for the apprehension of evil. They constitute one of the many checks and balances of a liberal government. They are inseparable

from every tolerant system. Our wisest and purest statesmen have regarded the conflict of parties but as a neutralizing and harmless strife, and not to be deprecated except when prostituted to the service of the unprincipled and the ambitious, or when marked by personal or sectional animosity, or most of all when stimulated by questions geographical in character. Alas! that it should be our lot to fall upon the day when all these features of party warfare are to be discerned, nay, when the pen is exchanged for the sword, and the chamber of debate for the "tented field." But let us not, Christian Brothers, sink before the appalling picture. Since we are appointed to the crisis, let us boldly but humbly meet it, and faithfully discharge our duty before God and man. The servant of Christ has an office in an hour like this when the elements of storm have combined, as in days when the skies above him are cloudless and serene. He lies under special obligation as a follower of "the Prince of Peace" to avert by "the soft answer" and the life of "moderation" the threatened disasters which the madness of his brethren have invited. That such disasters would be rather precipitated by a departure from plain gospel preaching and a substitution therefor of pulpit denunciation, I have simply to affirm. Such disasters moreover will be hastened and intensified by the citizen who makes such warm espousal of partizan or patriotic views as shall veil his piety, or even cast a shadow upon a single feature of his Christian character. Men, even in their most irrational and excited moods, look with suspicion upon any departure from consistency in others, and are prompt to pronounce and execute the harshest judgments. They look with something more than suspicion upon any attempt to exercise extra official functions, even in revolutionary times. If then Christian preachers have assumed only to declare our duty to God and the soul, how can they expect men to respect them, when they go further and teach our duty to government, in the various complications incident to its life and progress. If the humble follower of Jesus professes "forbearance" and "long-suffering" and "love," as cardinal principles of the new life upon which he has entered, let him not prove unworthy his

vocation, let him not extinguish his influence and stand convicted of inconsistency before a censorious world, by entertaining and confessing a bitterness of feeling and by engaging in passionate and violent acts. The influence of the Christian preacher and the Christian man should be swayed not as a weapon of offence, but as a mighty lever for the elevation of the individual and the aggregate from the mire of native depravity to the eminences of peace and love. Deprecating all violence of speech and action until called to the righteous defence of home and country, and then going forth "in the name of the Lord," and calling upon Him to "cover your head in the day of battle," the Christian citizen can then vindicate the dignity of his manhood and the purity of his patriotism, without infracting in the least those laws of spiritual life to which he has vowed holy allegiance.

My own conceptions of duty, under the circumstances in which we as Christians and as men find ourselves placed, are derived from the prayerful contemplation of such passages of God's word as that which I now press upon your consideration. It is in the expansion and adaptation of these teachings we are to find a panacea for the disorders which inflame the body politic. But let us begin with our own hearts. Let us first pour oil upon the troubled water within. Let us assuage all bitterness, subdue all prejudice, calm each excited feeling, quench every turbulent spirit, study the law of forgiveness even "until seventy times seven," and invoke the sweet influences of the Holy Ghost to the ordering of all within us right in the sight of God. Thus prepared, let us proceed in our respective lines of duty, guided by the peace-producing principle of moderation. Under its benign influence we shall have no presentation of exciting secular topics in places sacred to the preaching of Christ. We shall have no estrangement of pastor and people, by reason of diverse political sentiment. We shall have no marshalling of the clergy as a profession to answer to charges of unfaithfulness to their holy trust. We shall have no more demagogueism in the pulpit,—the wresting of Scripture to the purposes of a political harangue. We shall be spared everywhere, in the popular

assembly, in the private walks of life, in the public press, this constant appeal to passion and prejudice, this distorting of truth, this provoking to anger, this interchange of calumnies. But that moderation may prevail we must have a more frequent and earnest reiteration of the simple truths and essential doctrines of the Bible, a more distinct and continued lifting up of Christ, a more impressive exhibition of paramount duties. The Sabbath assemblies must be occasions for contemplating in all their length and breadth the obligations we owe to God, and the fearful penalties we shall incur if by our worldliness we fail to discharge them. I believe that the faithful preaching and heeding of the word of God will directly or indirectly always prove a speedy and sure restorative of public tranquility. It brings back the mind and heart from passionate excursions, to regard the real objects of our living in the world. In perilous times, in times of war there is only the greater need for the distinct enunciation and the devout examination of the truth, lest the soul be beguiled and fatally led astray by the many false lights which fitfully flash around it; lest it feel for a moment that patriotism is more exalted than piety, that there is a cause more honorable than the cause of Jesus, that there is a war more needful to be waged than the war against sin and Satan, that there are duties which demand a partial or entire suspension of the discharge of duty to God. How clear is the obligation, how great the work, and how vast the influence of the Christian citizen in this hour of hate, this day of discord. While recognizing more than ever his responsibility to God and the soul, and living as concerned chiefly with things unseen and eternal, he may not only by the silent eloquence of his example, but by his positive conduct in soothing word and conciliatory work, soften the asperities of partizan and sectional feeling and oppose a barrier to the on-rolling tide of war. Let him but bring the things said and done, proposed and attempted, out into that broad light which reflects from the book of God, and the common eye will be shocked at their enormity. Again, he may re-unite many a tie, weld many a link, which though rudely snapped in the hot haste of passion, shall

again bind loving hearts together. Each one seeking out his own avenue of usefulness and pursuing it with singleness of heart, and all concerted under the principle of moderation, shall produce for the common weal results the most benignant. Pending this and all other efforts for a return of peace and a re-kindling of love, let our prayers continually ascend that the spirit of moderation may pervade with its calming influence each element of discord and soothe to composure each angry agent of evil. Pending this issue, let us not give place to fainting or fears. While gratefully adoring that great Power above who rules this whirlwind and directs this storm, and who thus far has spared us the horrors of conflict and carnage, let us not forget that He has promised to "make all things work together for good to them that love him," that he will "cause the wrath of man to praise him and the remainder of wrath restrain." Let us but be faithful to Him and He will give light in our darkest days, and solace in our sorest troubles, and help in our greatest extremity.

If you are willing, my brethren, to accept the counsel I offer you, it is but right that I should present you in conclusion, by way both of encouragement and warning, some manifest certitudes, obvious enough to the Christian in ordinary times, but now, I fear, but vaguely discerned and poorly appreciated.

And first, "the Lord reigneth," that God with whom "nothing is impossible;" and though this be the day of his wrath, he is still almighty in power and perfect in love. We have therefore no ground for the apprehension, that through his Providence we may not still have in answer to our prayers, not only salvation from our imminent perils, but also a complete restoration of past blessings. An unswerving fidelity to Him may yet secure to us that same merciful goodness which blessed the faithful Job with a prosperity double greater than he had ever enjoyed before his affliction.

Again, there are those now living and participating in the exciting transactions of these days, who shall yet behold them in the light of history. When we have recovered from the madness of the moment, when this vio-

lent excitement shall have given place to the inevitable reaction, when the elements now so disturbed have settled to their level, shall the retrospect reveal us in attitudes of fidelity to God and our brother? While enacting these events, which are to make the saddest page in history, let us beware how we sink our religion and our humanity in the pit of passion, and so blacken the record of "these o'er darkened days," and bequeath to our own future and to our posterity, a heritage of shame.

Again, ideas conceived, counsels proffered and events precipitated in times of tumult, afford no healthful guides or standards to the Christian citizen. Then, his proposed arbitrament of reason is denounced as cowardice, his calm and catholic moderation is branded as treason, his wise deliberation as want of patriotism, and his constant appeal to the will of Heaven as sheer fanaticism. Then, however, he must not fail to remember that the ordeal of blood is only justifiable as the last resource of a righteous defence, that the true patriot is always a man of moderation, that Christian principles and Christian virtues are the same in war as in peace, that rashness is always irrational, that there can be no liberty without toleration, that the honest mind must be ready to receive testimony from every quarter, and that from the hasty and harsh judgments of the present, it can appeal with confidence to the calm and righteous decisions of the future.

Again, war is the greatest of demoralizers. It unspiritualizes the Church, and tempts it with the artful baits of man-service and the pleasant policies of expediency, reducing its holy dignity by betraying it to fears and trembling, to the ever changing counsels of a faithless timidity. It wrecks popular sentiment, introducing anarchy of opinion, disturbing the relations of thought, giving factitious importance to the things of the hour, and enthroning in the highest places of respect the agencies which compass quick success;—ignoring the lessons of the past, and the penalties of the future, while busied with the infatuating present and its glowing issues. Meanwhile, religion and friendship and moral responsibilities and business obligations are swallowed up in the vortices of passion which whirl devouringly on every side. But most of all, is the demoral-

izing influence of war exerted upon the piety of the individual, projecting its poison into the very elements of character, and necessitating the exorcism of the Holy Spirit continually to keep the poor soul from succumbing to its fatal power. Every where are to be observed traces of its demoralization, even here and now, where it is just seeking to be instituted. How patent every Christian's duty to work, as he has never worked before, to counteract this pernicious influence, and to enlist every energy of the renewed nature for the conservation of Christ's honor in the Church and his life in the soul. When men fight each other, Satan seeks to become an ally to both the parties engaged, opening fresh batteries against the entrenchments of Christian principle, and attempting to subvert by bold assault or subtle strategy the strongholds of faith. How vitally necessary, then, that in time of war the believer should have larger supplies of grace, and greater boldness of spirit, and increased fidelity to the cause he is sworn to defend, and more perfect singleness of purpose in his Christian living; and that he should unswervingly continue at the post of duty, and unceasingly hold up the broad and bright standard of his religion, inscribed with the name and faith of Jesus, floating high above the dank vapors of excited feeling and the dun smoke of battle,—waving in the majesty of truth, and in the beauty of holiness, “for an ensign to the people,” even “an ensign to the nations from afar.”

Again, it is every man's duty to look upon these times in the light of eternity. Ah! how the magnitude of existing issues is diminished when illuminated with this celestial radiance. As the greatest events and most famous men, the fiercest conflicts and the most crimsoned scenes of history are dwarfed in the hazy perspective of the retreating ages, so from the future eminences of eternity shall we revert with the eye of marvel to the fleeting scenes of this drama of a day, in which we were so insanely absorbed as to forget for the time the paramount obligations of the soul, the fearful realities of the judgment, the awful alternative of eternity.

Still again, God never visits with the rod of chastening the individual or the nation, but what he designs that they should be exercised and amended thereby. How shocking to the Christian now to behold those from whom the rod is only extorting the utterances of passion, the wild words of hate, and mutual measures of fierce retaliation. Ah! well shall it be for us if we now make solemn pause, and heed the plain speaking lessons which God is teaching the country and the soul. The demagogueism of the pulpit, the license of the press, the wide spread contempt of all authority, and the consequent spirit of lawlessness among the people,—abusing the abundance of their liberty, the lethargy of the Church, the low standard of religious living,—notwithstanding the unexampled enjoyment of Christian privilege, and the general ingratitude and indifference toward that God who has “blessed us as he has not blessed any other people,” are certainly matters which demand our most serious regard, when God hides his face in anger and lets loose upon us the agencies of his wrath.

How mournful the spectacle,—enough to make angels weep, the sad sight presented now in this fair land to the tearful eye of patriotism and philanthropy: enough to wring the heart of the believer that our high and boasted Christian civilization, should culminate in the savagery of fratricidal war, that so far as the passions of unregenerate man are concerned, civilization should end just where it begins. Ah, God is fearfully trying us now! Pray, brothers, pray for the Holy Ghost to give strength to your Christian character, that its sparkling virtues may now shine forth and prove to all men that the religion of Christ is a glorious reality and equal to every emergency of world life. Unveil the beauty of Christian love, and display the power of Christian faith, and teach the world the lesson it has long been waiting to learn, viz: that there is a resistless might in the principles of Christianity; nay, that Moderation, the daughter of Love, the Conqueror, when divinely directed, can “beat swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks.” Pray, brother pray, that the scarlet flag of war may be furled, and the snowy folds of the banner of peace be flung out to the carressing winds of heaven,

to wave in honor of the Prince of Peace, until he shall come in his glory to rule the nations in love.

In concluding my discourse, I beg to remind you, that I have been preaching the Gospel of your Salvation. In displaying the principle of Christian Moderation as the word in season to the Church and the country, I have, as I believe, set forth that which enters importantly in the work and plan of Salvation. I can conceive no well-balanced Christian character which does not embrace it. It is inseparably allied with faith. It is an element of hope. It is charity. As the great fact of the new covenant is "God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," so should the great act of our new lives be the regarding of our brethren through Christ reconciling them unto ourselves. If God treats the sinner with moderation that he may reconcile and save him, is it not our duty to make our moderation known unto all men, that we may reconcile them unto ourselves, and restore fraternal harmony? And if it be a Christian duty thus to act, it is a Christian duty thus to preach. The spirit of conciliation is of the very marrow of the Gospel. It must animate the individual soul if it would make sure of its inheritance. It must inspire the Church if she would be true to her mission. It must pervade the heart of the nation if it would bequeath its priceless franchises of freedom. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, by your memories of Jesus, by your fidelity to the truth, by the glories of your country's history, by the nobility of your patriotism, by your responsibility to the present age, by your obligations to the future, and by the prospect of that great amnesty which, in the last day, shall cancel your sins and admit you to the joys of perfect and eternal peace, "Let your moderation be known unto all men."
